Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

ALCHEMY OF PRAYER

I kneel
In tears
And feel
God hears.

I rise
Sin free
Love cries
In me.

—Loreta Inman

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OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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REBIRTH THROUGH PRAYER

AFTER A PROLONGED ILLNESS in my youth, followed by a severe disappointment, I wearied myself into a state of introversion. Sinking deep into the depths of despair, I shrank almost wholly from meeting reality. The joys of my childhood had vanished, and with them the continuity of being able to hold the cherished friends I had known. Lack of fervor made me languid and resentful in brooding. I existed in a world divided—that wide abyss known as disintegration.

One day, through the somber shadows of my life, the sun began to shine faintly and I turned toward it, and to the Lord in prayer. I prayed, inwardly, more than ever before in my life. There was a prayer on my lips constantly, and with it came the understanding that Light and God were one—the Good. I began to believe that as a child of God I was not meant to live in the shadows of obscurity and oblivion.

THEN CAME THE GREAT AWAKENING, the spiritual anointment, the realization that my prayers were being answered, and I was reborn to the living Light of reality. Its first manifestation was almost overpowering, so outpouring was the great illumination that transformed my life. I began to see beyond myself a brighter future, and now I knew that Truth makes for wholeness and frees us from the chain of human error. The waste I had lived through was transformed to substance and reality, and prayer had accomplished all of it.

— Helen Gee Woods

EDITORIAL

PATTERNS OF REGENERATION

We belong to Life, not to ourselves. Nothing we have is ours, except our innermost essence, our wills. Everything else belongs to God, to Life, to the Universe, to others. Foolish people take a long time to realize this, the wise learn the lesson earlier and thus spare themselves unnecessary grief. All of us are becoming instruments of Life in its eternal struggle to realize itself, to know itself; the embodiments of all the vast energies and attributes and powers that Life is ready to bestow on him who turns himself into a vehicle of its universal impetus and unifying force. This force cannot know itself without us, just as a man can never see his own face. What he sees in a mirror is only a reflection of himself. His own face, only others see; to discover what he is really like, he must find it in the faces of others. It is the same with Life, for which each of us serves as a mirror in which it may discover just that much more of itself.

The regenerative life is a dynamic life, which means a life of *process*, of change, of growth and expansion. In the struggle to know its own nature Life throws up endless challenges which only the brave may face. Without these the deep places of the mind and soul cannot be tapped, the real strength of the will cannot be mined. They are absolutely necessary for the real growth we all crave in our hearts, despite our demurrers and hesitations. The steel that will support bridges and the weight of locomotives must be fired and tested until an unbreakable core is achieved. The soul, too—our wills—must be tested and fired in the same way.

We are to become the bearers of infinite burdens and for this we must become strong. Christ bore the weight of the entire world on his shoulders and with one single act of will threw all of humanity forward along the path to world regeneration. Buddha did the same. Each was an Atlas, and each of us sooner or later will have to do the same. The potential is there in us and eventually it must come out, it must be manifested.

A major problem is to grasp and clarify the tendencies in us pressing for solution, for resolution, for *acknowledgment and recognition from us*—the tendencies within that will, when recognized and developed,

carry us forward on waves of our own innate strength, until ever-new tendencies, mounting from those, are set in motion on ever-higher levels of our journey. *We must struggle to make ourselves conscious of what is happening to us.*

In the effort to overcome ourselves we are often amazed at what we can do. A sense of awe and wonder at our own possibilities seizes us, a tremendous feeling of inner elation. After a period of preparation and endurance, we suddenly overcome old tendencies in a critical situation, we face an unexpected crisis and break down the barriers that stand against us. We feel that we can, after all, banish weakness forever and become strong, invulnerable—flexible and efficient instruments of the divine power seeking to use, mould, and perfect us. And then, all too often, we act as though we want to undo all the good we have won. Often, we cannot check the power we have generated and are ignorantly driven to dissipate it in small, careless ways. It is as if we find it difficult to accept ourselves *for what we are becoming,* for what we may be after all! An uncanny resistance and restiveness grows in us, we feel ourselves drifting, wandering in a void; or we are strangely irritable, discontented, prepared for the worst. We may feel that at any moment our foundation will collapse and we will be exposed as frauds and pretenders! We may wonder when the spell will break and we are plunged back again into the narrow orbit of our old ego-ridden selves!

These are the signs of the restlessness of growth, of new potentials for responsibility and control: just as a young man emerging from adolescence may chafe under his new burden. They are the overtures to new break-throughs in the world of our minds, preludes to victory. *Then above all is the time to stand fast* until the reaction has run its course and we are free to move on. (In Nature we notice a strange calm that comes over earth and sky and all life after a great storm has passed. It is the same with our own Nature. All nature is one.)

For we have collected some hard-won energy of mind and spirit and the new burden of this energy presses on us at times, in a mysterious way, with no precedents for it in our previous experience: a psychic and emotional potential for new life and consciousness *which we must not allow to be dissipated* through ignorance of the forces that play upon our spiritual progress, and of the cyclical nature of their interaction upon our lives.

(When we lived under the dominance of ego we thought we were

separate individuals able under our own power to manage our lives, and it takes some time, even on the regenerative path, to dispel this illusion and accept the fact that there are mighty forces operating in this universe—powers for good and evil, creative and destructive powers alike—*all of them converging most especially on the awakened soul trying to realize its own nature.* Through systematic and guided meditation we are able to hold at bay the negative and hostile powers and saturate our minds with the influence of the positive, life-giving forces until they become part of us and the perverse, separative influences are pushed more and more from our consolidating center.)

Often, after one challenge has been successfully met, another may confront us almost at once, on the heels of the first. Sometimes this second test thrust at us seems wanton, unjust, perverse, evil; it may strike us down suddenly in mid-passage, rob us of power, immobilize us. *This is when prayer is our only refuge.* It seems too much, so often, that we should have to go through another ordeal in such quick succession, without preparation, without having sighted the difficulty and the nature of the trial ahead of time.

We have, in our initial conquest, by a sudden condensation of positive energy, set in motion an equal negative reaction that moves to push us back to the point we had reached before the first trial had loomed. To combat this second, reactive challenge we have to suppress all feelings of elation and personal pride in the original victory, check the mind's tendency to rush out resentfully and uncontrolled in the second instance, and drive back into the center of our minds (by sheer force of will) the power collected which surges up blindly seeking to escape. Sometimes, instead of another immediate challenge, the reaction may come in the form of anxiety and restlessness and a sense of drift. Or an insidious and unaccountable depression may seize us, which is the most treacherous reaction of all. Whatever the reaction, something will come. We do not make conquests in the life of the spirit without these things happening to us at every step of the way and as early as possible we must be prepared for them. Once we are, much of their power to confuse and depress us is broken.

In successfully surmounting difficulties of a type that has always intimidated us, in proving that we *can* be different than we have been, that our minds *will* respond to our wills and to the attritive power of spiritual exercises, a crucial step has been taken in our spiritual

growth and in our whole spiritual destiny. The reverberations that are set up as a result of this wave of progress are simply *the old selves in us revolting,* the old habits of mind, so long entrenched, struggling to reassert themselves and re-possess their domain. Thus, in the process of reaction it is necessary that we *take possession* of the new ground gained, that we make it ours beyond the shadow of a doubt, assimilate the new knowledge and new strength, burn into our psyches the image of a new personality for ourselves.

So in the cyclical ebb and flow of spiritual life, reactions come to test us—not only to confuse us and drive us back to where we were, but to give us the chance *to corroborate the good we have won, vindicate the step we have taken.* Until we have done this, our new strength is not truly ours, the progress has not been genuinely made. When it is, nothing can remove it. It is ours forever.

Anxiety, then, and depressions, and inner resistance, and the strange restlessness we know, are unavoidable in the patterns of regeneration. Anxiety, in particular, troubles many. But where so much is at stake we must all feel some anxiety, at least at first. It is part of of the course. We should not be afraid of it. We are, after all, in a realm of the unknown: the world of the mind, the world of spirit. But a qualified teacher, systematic spiritual practices, and the breeze of God's grace are quite enough to guide and protect us, and excite us on to new accomplishments, to invite challenges, surmount crises, to grow in fearlessness and tranquillity, to have contempt for our hesitations and for what we were, to cultivate the habit of prayer at all times, and so keep ourselves in readiness against the hour when, suddenly, in this very life, we are lifted up into the light of God and freed....and able then to make others free.

WE THINK HIGHLY of humanity, we feel ourselves strong and valiant, we make grand resolves; but when the "dogs" of trial and temptation bark, we are like the stag in the fable. Then, if such is the case, what is the use of teaching all these things? There is the greatest use. The use is this, that perseverance will finally conquer. Nothing can be done in a day.

— *Swami Vivekananda*

GROWING PAINS

WHEN I WAS TWELVE I joined the church at a camp meeting. I got emotional and afterwards felt very smug and good for a while, but nothing was really changed in my character and after a time the let-down set in. My thinking was not changed and neither were my selfish ways. Everything was as it had been before. I still felt that Jesus loved me. It was a very good feeling, like having another godfather or a third parent. My parents loved me too. All of them loved to give me presents. A beautiful world to live in—food when I was hungry, water when I was thirsty, warmth when I was cold, an education, everything I needed and most of the things I wanted. Each new present was a delight and I hugged the giver warmly and gushed over with gratitude. It did not occur to me that I too had something to give.

I GREW UP AND HAD CHILDREN of my own. But I was still a child in the kingdom of God. Then the depression came. My parents lost their jobs and when conditions got better they were too old to get work. Dollars were scarce. I went back to work and my parents came to live with us. Several years passed and my mother had a stroke that paralyzed her right side. I am sure no one thought I (a spoiled only child) could manage a home, a marriage, two teen-age children, a job and an invalid. I asked God for help and got it. I was weary and I made mistakes, but did the best I could. God needed me for this particular work and there was no one else to do it.

MY OWN PARENTS are gone now, but I can give God presents. I can give them to Him by proxy. There are other lonely old people who love a bit of attention. I no longer avoid people in trouble because I don't know what to say, for I have known trouble intimately. I can go beyond saying, "If there is anything I can do please let me know." I can see their need in their eyes and offer tangible help from my memories of my own need.

Peter and Paul tasted bitter shame before they began to be mature men. For me it is a consolation to know that the early saints grew through pain and practice even as you and I.

—Janet Hackney

THE NEW LOOK

HOW MANY TIMES can the simple commonplace tasks of our daily routines be transformed to take on a deeper significance. Window-washing has long been regarded as a menial and time-consuming chore. Yet what an expanding vista it can open up if once viewed with a new look. Merely washing away the accumulation of daily grime does not clean the window. We must polish up the lenses of our spiritual eyes, taking away the residue of weariness, boredom and impatience with the things at hand.

I polished a small pane in my window...I discovered a blue jay swinging on a twig above his nest. Happiness and hope seemed to spread like a sapphire mantle over his feathers. I quickly cleaned another square and there a pink rose with pearls of dew in her heart lifted a chalice to the sun.

Each window revealed new treasures. A giant butterfly lifting new born wings...A child bent in earnest intent watching a snail's ponderous pace across the green velvet moss...The ginger's bloom was an ivory scented candle bending to each passing breeze...And little fallen stars of jasmine hung suspended in a necklace strung by a patient spider, weaving in the early morn.

SOMEHOW MY TASK seemed no more to plague me with drudgery. I have a new look at God's shining world.

— Zelma Dennis

CATHEDRAL

My soul is tuned to inner peace,
Above confusion's wild caprice,
Within cathedral walls release.
Awakening with prayer impearled,
My soul is tuned to inner peace
Against the chaos of the World.

— Helen Gee Woods

SMALL MIRACLES

Louise Weibert Sutton

Yesterday I held a miracle in my hand. It came drifting down the scarf of wind into my lap as I sat out in my garden crocheting. Carelessly I picked it up, thinking only to flip it away, when something about it attracted my attention...it was so exquisitely and beautifully made! On closer inspection, I saw it was a box elder seed.

I saw how the great "machine of life" with superb natural automation had given it and its brothers perfectly constructed tiny transparent coverings to protect the "tree-babies" on their journey to the ground. The edge of each small package was sealed with infinite care, so as to exclude dust and injury during distribution by the wind. At the edge of each tiny seed-cover there was also a delicate round cut, the top edges bent slightly away from each other, to facilitate flight. No aerodynamist ever contrived a more perfect little glider. Surely the old tree could confidently send forth her seedlings into the world, well-equipped for new adventures in tree-making!

AS I SAT THERE thinking how each small seed was such a supreme work of art, I wondered with what reasoning an atheist can say: "There is no Creator!"

Recently the Russian Cosmonaut, after his flight into space, remarked that in all his journeying, he had seen nothing to convince him of God. It seems ridiculous for anyone to base belief on the three dimensions, when the products of so many other "dimensions" can be seen so freely on every side... radio waves, magnetism and gravity, television, sound, and even the force which came to being in this seed!

The human ability to believe in that not yet seen is limited; but as man progresses intellectually through the ages, surely his discoveries show him how conclusively other dimensions do exist. The mind, for instance: who can run a finger over a thought, or hold it under a microscope and look at it? We cannot pull out a dream and take it over to the window and examine it, or draw a ring around sympathy, or cut something out of the material we call hope; yet they are infinitely real.

WE TURN ON our radios, and sounds are captured from thin blue air, usually silent, so far as we can tell, except for the singing of birds or the noise of man's own activities close by; the television set brings forth to view people and

events impossible to see with the usual senses from afar; the miracles of modern science are penetrating vast fields beyond our five senses, and far beyond the obvious dimensions of height, width and depth, daily.

Why is it so impossible to believe in a dimension of spirit?

Since man has a tendency to doubt, as well as believe, God gave him the power to find answers through reason as well as faith. Lack of mental growth is mental stagnation; so man does well when he uses his God-given miracle of keen mentality to search out life's answers.

MAN HAS ALWAYS had an instinct for eternity. Some deny this, but it is nonetheless true. Everything he does shows it. He lives in expectations, and is never satisfied to close the Book. Even in primitive peoples there is a feeling for eternal things, and a need to acknowledge God. Thus in their limited and small ways, tribes in many parts of the world try to envision God and please Him. Some set up small idols, and try to see Him there; some bow down to the things of nature, thinking perhaps He is part of these things; and others seek him in various other ways. There is no more reason for deriding man's instinct for a Creator and eternal things, than there is to deride that unerring something which causes the lower animals to live out their lives in some pattern best for them, set forth from the dawn of time by the force we call "God".

As I laid the small seed aside on the grass, I sighed, thinking it a shame so many small seeds would float down to no purpose, since some must surely perish without giving birth to trees. Yet something whispered that all life eventually is returned to the Great Reservoir at last. Nothing God has created is made to be ultimately wasted.

SCIENTISTS TELL US that matter as we know it is never completely annihilated. It can be changed by the processes of heat, cold, light, and so forth, to other forms, but nothing can ever be completely erased from existence in some form. Thus I have faith that this is true of the spirit of man, also. When the body is laid aside, surely some part of man lives on. Man has not been given ability to mature mentally and spiritually to no avail. Beautifully contrived though it is, the small seed must cast aside its cloak before it can spring into a tree. Thus small seeds are themselves parables of eternity.

THE CASE FOR REINCARNATION

(Following our regular practice of presenting aspects and interpretations of non-Christian faiths, we have collected a number of statements on the twin doctrines of Karma and reincarnation* which are fundamental to several great non-Christian religions and have become incorporated in the thinking of many serious-minded Westerners in our time. For further comment on the subject, we refer our readers to the book review on page 33.)

ABSURD AS THIS NOTION of reincarnation may appear to a modern European, there can be no doubt that it ranks among the very oldest entertained by man. It would seem, by the approximate universality of this opinion throughout the world, that it was not so out of joint with reason as some have supposed...An infant may take one breath of outer air, and die; a child may live only through the few years of supposed non-responsibility; a man may have diseased brain, or defective brain, and be idiotic or weak-headed for life...Something seems wanting to vindicate Divine Providence, to vindicate the goodness and justice of Deity to *all* the race. It was, then, natural that some proposed a return to earth, under other conditions, to carry on the work of spiritual progression and soul discipline. The pampered sensualist returned a beggar; the proud oppressor, a slave; the selfish woman of fashion, a seamstress. A turn of the wheel gave a chance for the development of neglected or absued intelligence and feeling.

— James Bonwick

The only survival I can conceive is to start a new earth cycle again.

— Thomas A. Edison

Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality. None but very hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity.

— Thomas Huxley

I BELIEVE that we are here now and will come back again...I adopted the theory of Reincarnation when I was twenty-six. Religion offered nothing to the point. Even work could not give me complete satisfaction. Work is futile if we cannot utilize the experience we collect in one life in the next. When I discovered Reincarnation it was as if I had

* (Sometimes referred to as transmigration or metempsychosis. —Ed.)

found a universal plan. I realized that there was a chance to work out my ideas. Time was no longer limited. I was no longer a slave to the hands of the clock...The discovery of Reincarnation put my mind at ease.

— Henry Ford

All my life I have had an awareness of other times, and places. I have been aware of other persons in me...I remembered that I had once been the son of a king. More—I remembered that once I had been a slave and a son of a slave, and worn an iron collar round my neck...I, like any man, am a growth. I did not begin when I was born nor when I was conceived. I have been growing, developing, through incalculable myriads of milleniums. All these experiences of all these lives have gone to the making of the soul-stuff or the spirit-stuff that is I...I am all of my past. All my previous selves have their voices, echoes prompting in me...I am man born of woman. My days are few, but the stuff of me is indestructible. I have been woman born of woman. I have been a woman and borne my children. And I shall be born again. Oh, incalculable times again shall I be born...

— Jack London in THE STAR ROVER

The doctrine of metempsychosis is neither absurd nor useless. It is not more surprising to be born twice than once.

—Voltaire

THERE NEVER WAS a more beautiful, a juster, a purer, a more moral, fruitful and consoling nor, to a certain point, a more probable creed. It alone, with its doctrine of successive expiations and purifications, accounts for all the physical and intellectual inequalities, all the social iniquities, all the hideous injustices of fate.

— Maurice Maeterlinck

I see myself in the different ages of history, quite clearly, engaging in different trades and experiencing various fortunes...Many things would be explained if we only knew our real genealogy.

— Flaubert (In a letter)

Millions of years ago, in my previous incarnations, I must have been related to swans or wild geese, because I can still feel that affinity.

— Jean Sibelius.

HOW WELL IT WOULD BE, could one describe the experiences of a man who in a former life committed suicide. He will ever be meeting the same demands that formerly faced him, and so he will arrive at the awareness that he has to fulfill those demands. Set right by this experience, this man will be wiser than others.

— Leo Tolstoy (Diary entry)

Methinks the hawk that soars so loftily and circles so steadily and apparently without effort, has earned this power by faithfully creeping on the ground as a reptile in a former state of existence...I lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago...As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now a New-Englander...As far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence.

— Henry David Thoreau

Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him: It is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of nothing, and that his present birth is his first entrance into life.

In the succession of births...the persons who now stand in close connection or contact with us will also be born along with us at the next birth, and will have the same or analogous relations and sentiments towards us as now, whether these are of a friendly or a hostile description.

— Arthur Schopenhauer

PLATO BELIEVED wholeheartedly in reincarnation, and his famous 'Theory of Reminiscence' asserted that 'knowledge easily acquired is that which the enduring self had in an earlier life, so that it flows back easily'...

The Christian affirms that God is just, that ultimately life is just, that justice is what we call an 'eternal value'. It will be vindicated at last. Now if we take this life as we often see it, how terribly unfair and unjust it seems. I have known people who, humanly speaking, have never had a chance, born with defects that appear to mar their lives, or else meeting with a whole series of misfortunes that shut them off from the happiness others know...But if we accept the idea that all these inequalities are the result—in a cosmos of cause and effect—of earlier causes, the product of some distant past, the fruit of earlier choices, then our sense of justice is preserved...

LET US SUPPOSE that a very depraved or entirely materialistic person dies. Let us suppose that from a religious point of view he has entirely misused his earth-life. Will his translation to a spiritual plane do all that needs doing? Will it not be like putting a person who has never given himself any chance to understand music into an everlasting concert?...Can a man who has entirely neglected spiritual things be happy in

a spiritual environment? If you say, 'Oh well, he can learn in the next 'phase' —is there nothing lost by misuse of the earth-life? Doesn't such a speculation make the earth-life meaningless? I don't think we shall be able to skip the examinations of life like that. It would be as incongruous and unsound as telling a medical student, who failed his qualifying examination, not to bother, but to go on treating people as if he had qualified. If I fail to pass those examinations in life which can only be taken while I dwell in a physical body, shall I not have to come back and take them again?...

— Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead

What is incorruptible must also be ungenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth...Metempsychosis is, therefore, the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.

— David Hume

In the Hindu and Buddhist versions of the Perennial Philosophy the divine mercy is matched by the divine patience: both are infinite. For oriental theologians there is no eternal damnation; there are...an indefinite series of second chances...

— Aldous Huxley

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting...

— Wordsworth

I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the road again.

— John Masefield

YESTERDAY, AT DINNER TIME, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence—a confused idea that nothing that passed was said for the first time; that the same topics had been discussed and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them....

— Sir Walter Scott (Diary Entry)

We have all had some experience of a feeling, that comes over us occasionally, of what we are saying and doing having been said and done before, in a remote time—of our being surrounded, dim ages ago, by the same faces, objects and circumstances—of our knowing perfectly what will be said next, as if we suddenly remembered it!

— Charles Dickens in DAVID COPPERFIELD

I FIND MYSELF in some scene which I cannot have visited before and which is yet perfectly familiar; I know that it was the stage of an action in which I once took part and am about to take part again.

— John Buchan

When the question is asked, "Where were we before we were born?" we have a definite answer in the system of slow development by incarnation, with long intervals of spirit rest between, while otherwise we have no answer, though we must admit that it is inconceivable that we have been born in time for eternity.

— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

It would be less difficult to bear the evils of one's own life if one could think that they were but the necessary outcome of one's errors in a previous existence.

— Somerset Maugham

My opinion is that we shall be reincarnated.

— David Lloyd George

BY REASON OF THE IDEA of reincarnation Indian thought can be reconciled to the fact that so many people in their minds and actions are still so engrossed in the world. If we assume that we have but one existence, there arises the insoluble problem of what becomes of the spiritual *ego* which has lost all contact with the Eternal. Those who hold the doctrine of reincarnation are faced by no such problem.

— Albert Schweitzer

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ON PRAYER

Robert H. Woodward

Practical man that he was, unorthodox in his manner of spiritual worship—indeed, the American personification of the Age of Reason—Benjamin Franklin nonetheless recognized the power of prayer as a means of attaining his humanitarian and benevolent goals. His writings contain records of numerous prayers of his own composition, as well as comments upon the efficacy and necessity of prayer.

On one of the infrequent occasions of his speaking to the Constitutional Convention, he arose at a particularly crucial moment to address the distinguished members, who had made small progress toward evolving a satisfactory constitutional plan. Their failure, he suggested, was evidence of "the imperfection of human understanding" and an indication of the need for wisdom from a higher source. He asked that the Convention adopt his proposal to open its subsequent sessions with prayer. "I have lived...a long time," he stated, "and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" The time was not ripe for the proposal, and no action was made on it. Only three or four persons, Franklin noted, shared his thoughts on the necessity for prayer at the meetings.

THROUGHOUT FRANKLIN'S life he turned on numerous occasions to prayer. As a young man, cheerfully devoting himself to "the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection" (as he tells in the *Autobiography),* he prepared a little marble-paged memorandum book in which to keep an accounting of his progress and of his failure in his attempt to master his thirteen virtues. He prefaced his little book with prayers and mottoes drawn from several writers, including Cicero, Joseph Addison, and Solomon. "Conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom," he wrote, "I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination, for daily use":

"O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me."

It is clear from the two instances referred to that Franklin regarded prayer as a means for obtaining wisdom to supplement man's limited intellectual resources. As a Deistic thinker and as a force in the Age of Enlightenment, he regarded man as ultimately perfectible—but only, his prayers suggest, if he could draw upon the source of perfection. Franklin also, sometimes used a brief prayer which he had found in the *Poems* of James Thomson, an English poet (1700-1748):

Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good; teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and fill my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!

This poem again reflects Franklin's attitude toward prayer. This American image of the man of positive thought and action was willing to act for himself; what he prayed for was the wisdom to guide his actions properly.

AS A MAN ACUTELY AWARE of the intricate structure of the universe—an example of the handiwork of a consummate creator—Franklin also regarded prayer as a means of expressing his adoration of the power and goodness, as well as the wisdom, of the Creator. In a paper entitled "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion" (1728), he recorded a prayer of adoration of his own composition. It presents in miniature the basic features of Franklin's philosophy: his belief in God the Father, his awe of the Creation and his awareness of its mechanical perfection, his belief in human perfectibility, his joy in living life to the fullest as a means of making use of God's bounty, and his humanitarian code of ethical behavior:

O wise God, my good Father!

Thou beholdest the sincerity of my heart and of my devotion; grant me a continuance of Thy favor!

O Creator, O father! I believe that Thou art good, and that Thou art pleased with the pleasure of Thy children. Praised be Thy name forever!

By Thy power hast Thou made the glorious sun, with his attending worlds; from the energy of Thy mighty will they first received their prodigious motion, and by Thy wisdom hast Thou prescribed the wondrous laws by which they move. Praised be Thy name forever!

By Thy wisdom hast Thou formed all things. Thou hast created man, bestowing life and reason, and placed him in dignity superior to

Thy other earthly creatures. Praised be Thy name forever!

Thy wisdom, Thy power, and Thy goodness are everywhere clearly seen; in the air and in the water, in the Heaven and on Earth; Thou providest for the various winged fowl and the innumerable inhabitants of the water; Thou givest cold and heat, rain and sunshine, in their season, and to the fruits of the earth increase. Praised be Thy name forever!

Thou abhorrest in Thy creatures treachery and deceit, malice, revenge, intemperance, and every other hurtful vice; but Thou art a lover of justice and sincerity, of friendship and benevolence, and every virtue. Thou art my friend, my Father, and my benefactor. Praised be Thy name, O God, forever! Amen!

THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, as a young man beginning his career and later as an oracle of human wisdom, in his private and public lives, Benjamin Franklin frequently expressed his belief in the inadequacy of a man who had no resources but his own limited ones. To Franklin, prayer was the one fountain at which he could partake of the wisdom of the Father of the Universe.

TO A SINGING TREE

I sense a Presence, lofty tree,
So poised and calmly dwarfing me,
And heed your ever-huming word;
I stand here mute and deeply stirred
And would translate the native tongue
In which your providential songs are sung
That all might know the sacred plan
For brotherhood of tree and man.

— Carla Patsuris

A CHILDHOOD MEMORY

(In Dostoevsky's celebrated novel THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV there is a moving scene that occurs at the very end of the book, after the funeral of the schoolboy Ilusha in the epilogue chapter called "The Speech at the Stone." Participating in the scene are Alyosha Karamazov, perhaps the central figure in the whole novel, and the schoolboy friends of Ilusha. The passage, and in fact the novel itself, remind us that religious values may be discovered in art and literature as well as in specifically religious fields.)

THEY ALL STOOD STILL by the big stone. Alyosha looked and the whole picture...of that day, when Ilusha, weeping and hugging his father, had cried, "Father, father, how he insulted you," rose at once before his imagination. A sudden impulse seemed to come into his soul. With a serious and earnest expression he looked from one to another of the bright, pleasant faces of Ilusha's schoolfellows, and suddenly said to them: "Boys, I should like to say one word to you, here at this place."

The boys stood round him and at once bent attentive and expectant eyes upon him.

"Boys, we shall soon part. Soon I shall leave this town, perhaps for a long time, so we shall part. Let us make a compact, here, at Ilusha's stone that we will never forget Ilusha and one another. And whatever happens to us later in life, if we don't meet for twenty years afterwards, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy at whom we once threw stones, do you remember, by the bridge? And afterwards we all grew so fond of him...He was a fine boy, a kind-hearted, brave boy, he felt for his father's honor and resented the cruel insult to him and stood up for him. And so in the first place, we will remember him, boys, all our lives. And even if we are occupied with most important things, if we attain to honor or fall into great misfortune—still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us, for the time we were loving that poor boy, better perhaps than we are. My dear children, perhaps you won't understand what I am saying to you, because I often speak very unintelligibly, but you'll remember it all the same and will agree with my words sometimes. .

"YOU MUST KNOW THAT THERE IS NOTHING higher and

stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood, of home. People talk to you a great deal about your education, but some good, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us.

"Perhaps we may even grow wicked later on, may be unable to refrain from a bad action, may laugh at men's tears...But however bad we may become, yet when we recall how we buried Ilusha, how we loved him in his last days, and how we have been talking like friends all together, at this stone, the cruellest and most mocking of us—if we do become so—will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment. What's more, perhaps, that one memory may keep him from great evil and he will reflect and say, Yes, I was good and brave and honest then!"...

"I SAY THIS IN CASE we become bad, but there's no reason why we should become bad, is there, boys? Let us be, first and above all, kind, then honest and then let us never forget each other! I say that again, I give you my word for my part that I'll never forget one of you. Every face looking at me now I shall remember even for thirty years...You are all dear to me, boys. From this day forth I have a place in my heart for you all, and I beg you to keep a place in your hearts for me! And who has united us in this kind, good feeling which we shall remember and intend to remember all our lives? Who, if not Ilusha, the good boy, the dear boy, precious to us for ever! Let us never forget him. May his memory live for ever in our hearts from this time forth!"

"Yes, yes, for ever, for ever!" the boys cried in their ringing voices, with softened faces.

"Let us remember his face and his clothes and his poor little boots, his coffin and his unhappy, sinful father, and how boldly he stood up for him alone against the whole school."

"We will remember, we will remember," cried the boys...

"Ah children, don't be afraid of life! How good life is when one does something good and just!"...

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"KNOW THYSELF"

Carol M. Mandola

Know Thyself is the command. But how, asks the seeker who enters the Path. Every day at the same hour and same place, set aside fifteen minutes to a half hour for meditation. Enter into the portals of self as if you were opening the door of a closet and were going inside for something precious deep within its recesses. When you have become still, ask the Lord to guide and strengthen you in your search.

Be not afraid. Meet thyself face to face, as though looking in a mirror, seeing yourself for the first time. Perhaps you may not like what you see.

For man to know himself there is no magic formula; it is like dissecting particles in a research laboratory: as each particle is discovered and labeled and placed in its proper category, the search becomes more exacting until the work is completed.

MAN WORKS FOR SPIRITUAL growth just as he would work for his bread to sustain the physical body. Man can read books and gather all the theoretical knowledge but unless he puts it into operation, he has nothing. It is like wanting to build a house but never putting the effort into operation: consequently, no house.

Obstacles must not be allowed to stand in the way. They are often precious gems of wisdom in disguise and necessary for development. Even the acorn does not shoot straight up into a mighty oak. While in the darkness of the earth, and propagation is taking place, should the acorn come in contact with a stone or pebble would its will or desire to grow cease? Does it turn back? No, it goes under or over, or any other way it can find to accomplish fulfillment; it never wearies, never faints on the way. It works to manifest or express its own good, just as man must work to express the nine virtues of *his* good. These virtues are the ingredients which make man the true man, much as eggs, milk, butter, sugar and flour are needed to bake a cake.

They are: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness and sincerity. Learn to work on one at a time; the divine pattern cannot be completed so long as one part is missing. It is a good thing when retiring for the night to examine the mind and search the heart, beginning at the last thing you have committed, going back over each act or thought throughout the day until you have reached the awakening of the day. Then face each error

and resolve not to let it be your "child" again. This is called confession. Once this act is performed, it becomes part of your spiritual life.

SELF CONFESSION is a duty and by it man comes to realize that he is responsible for every act and thought he commits; that he does not stand still but ever moves with the wheel of change, which is life, the law of the universe. Only God is changeless. Dryden tells us: "No man is the same today as he was yesterday or may be tomorrow."

The Scripture says, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free." What is Truth? *Knowing Thyself is knowing the Truth.* And Truth is God: Life, Love, and Light.

Every man is a pro-creator with God because he has the power to create good or evil through the channel of his mind. Man rises from his bed in the morning with little concern as to what he is creating with his first awakening thought. He is not aware that the first thought to take form in his mind will be responsible for his entire being today, tomorrow and the rest of his life. *Think* on this...*Reason.* Few realize the value of thought or how thought works. *Thoughts are things,* the invisible things hoped for (or feared). Thought is the fabric upon which the soul feeds, the many threads which are woven into the pattern of our destiny.

THOUGHTS ARE THE THINGS which build or destroy the spiritual and physical growth of man. Man is the highest manifestation of God and has the same creative power in a lesser degree. Today's thinking creates man's tomorrow because *man the thinker is man the creator.* If man would learn the power of mind through the perception of thought vibrations he would no longer live a life filled with destructive thought vibrations. Man and man alone is the parent of every good or evil thought he thinks and, once having initiated such thoughts, he has set in motion the law of reciprocity. What he sends out across the waves must return to him; he has created the pattern, good or evil, and is responsible for it.

Until we find ourselves threatened with some disease or sorrow, we go along without asking the question, *"Who am I, what am I here for?"*

"Know ye not that ye are the Temple of the living God?" This statement of St. Paul is the signpost that man fails to recognize. It is the beacon light to mankind. The body of man houses a Temple not built with hands, and holds the Light which is neither on land nor sea. Within man is a Divine Spark, that part of God given him to develop and

nurture, to bring out of the darkness, out of the cave of bondage.

The second birth, *Regeneration,* is man's work; he need not be strangled with the burden which threatens to keep life at a low ebb. Through work and faith motivated by the burning desire for his ideal, he is imbued with new expression and creates for himself a new life by living in harmony with the law of God and Nature. It is the pouring of new wine into new bottles.

DIVINE LOVE

COMPASSION is a God-quality, but sympathy and pity are human expressions, and only increase the seeming sadness of earth. Have deep compassion for all beings, but try not to get caught in the human tide of sympathy which is not Divine Love and has no healing value. It does not see from eternity's view. All things are moving to bring about man's permanent happiness but man, with his vision for a day, would create only temporary happiness for himself and others.

GOD'S WILL IS LOVE, and because of this, all events and circumstances are measured to bring our happiness.

—Vida Reed Stone

THE GARDEN OF LIFE

Let us go out into our Garden early in the morning in prayer and plant love, and we will grow more beautiful in the noonday sun. And when evening comes and the sun goes down on our Life's garden may we go out to meet our Master unafraid.

— Margaret Moore Jacobs

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

(In our August presentation of aspects of the Baha'i Faith we questioned a statement in a Baha'i publication denying that man could attain to direct knowledge of God. A Baha'i representative has asked us to quote a few selections from the sayings of the Baha'i Founders themselves. Baha'u'llah and his son Abdu'l-Baha, as an answer to the question we raised.)

HAVING CREATED THE WORLD...He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him...Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self....

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee....

THE PURPOSE OF GOD in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and attain His Presence. To this most excellent aim, this supreme objective, all the heavenly Books and the divinely-revealed and weighty Scriptures unequivocally bear witness....Man is of the image and likeness of God; that is to say, the perfections of God, the divine virtues are reflected or revealed in the human reality....Therefore every man imbued with divine qualities, who reflects heavenly moralities and perfections, who is the expression of ideal and praiseworthy attributes, is verily in the image and likeness of God....

Pray to God that He may strengthen you in divine virtue, so that you may be as angels in the world, and beacons of light to disclose the mysteries of the Kingdom to those with understanding hearts....It is incumbent upon thee to turn unto the Kingdom of God and to pray, supplicate and invoke during all times. This is the means by which thy soul shall ascend upward to the apex of the gift of God.

THROUGH THE FACULTY OF MEDITATION man attains to eternal life. Through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit.... Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

— Baha'i Publishing Trust

THE MAGIC STONE

Mark Halpern

INCREASING NUMBERS of humanity, realizing their individual responsibility today in building a new world of lasting peace and goodwill, are trying to refashion their own lives according to the highest ethics of Noble Living. No longer are they content to be servile and obedient slaves to the selfish desires and separative urges of the egotistic lower nature. Instead, each is trying to follow the Light of the Soul.

For many centuries now, the world has been waiting for the reappearance of the Great Master of Selfless Love. Today there is a strong conviction in the human heart that the hour of His coming is near. But who is there to say that He has not walked unrecognized amongst us more than once during these past two thousand years?

* * * * * *

IT WAS A WINTER EVE in a small town of Moravia, some hundred years ago....

The tall powerfully built man of middle age, Doctor Koro, stood gazing out through the window of the sumptuously furnished bedroom, watching the snow falling in the dusk. His features were drawn with anxiety and weariness. Now and then he would turn and glance back toward the bed, on which lay his dangerously ill daughter, a girl in her early teens. Her eyes were closed. Her dark brown hair fell in soft waves about her delicate face, heightening its feverish pallor.

Doctor Koro knew that he had done all he could do to save his only child, his motherless daughter Elsa. She kept sinking at a rate he knew would take her from him before the dawn of another day. He was the only physician in their little town—unless one wanted to count the "charlatan", who had come some months before, and who was practically starving in his effort to make a living among the poor.

Ah, if he had the Magic Stone....He had never ceased in his efforts to obtain the heart-shaped white stone, no bigger than an egg, whose mystic existence had been revealed to him in his youth by an old hermit. The Magic Stone, according to the story of the hermit, had often been seen on the person of The Nazarene by His closest disciples—the Master holding it in the palm of His hand during His healings. It emitted an unearthly

dazzling radiance. And shining from its center could be seen the living image of the Master's face!

Doctor Koro knew that in the capital, the city of Brunn, ninety miles away, there dwelt the most famous physician in all Moravia, but the time was too short. The heavy snowfall would make traveling on the roads difficult. There was not an hour to spare.

He would have to swallow his pride and call on the charlatan. Turning from the window he hurriedly left the room. A half hour later, Doctor Koro stood in the snow before the door of a hut in the poor section of the town. The lamplight was gleaming through a window. But there was no answer to his knocking.

Finally, he tried the door. Discovering that it was not locked, he entered.

Within he found no sign of any one being present. There was a cot against one wall, a couple of plain chairs, and a small table on which stood the lamp. Otherwise, the room was bare. There was no fire of any kind in the hut. But somehow Doctor Koro did not miss it. For no sooner had he entered, than he seemed to step into a luminous enveloping warmth.

"Won't you be seated, Doctor Koro?"

Wheeling about, Doctor Koro found himself in the presence of a humbly dressed man of about his own height, rather spare in build, and with a fine sensitive face that seemed tired and sad, but yet shone with an inner Light which more than sustained him.

WHEN THEY WERE SEATED, Doctor Koro came to the point: "My daughter Elsa is failing fast. I have tried everything I know, without success. I wish you to come home with me and see what you can do. At least my conscience will be clear—knowing I called in someone else."

"And do you have a conscience, Doctor Koro?"

"Of course I have!"

"Then has it never spoken to you all through the years when you were too busy with your wealthy patients to serve the poor of this town?"

"I had no time to waste on those who could not pay their bills. Serves me right for humbling myself to ask the help of an ordinary charlatan. It would

not have been necessary for me to lower myself if—if only—I had—"

"If only you had this, Doctor Koro?"

Doctor Koro stiffened in his chair, his eyes staring unbelievingly at the heart-shaped white stone the other was holding out to him. The stone was flashing such blinding radiance that Doctor Koro had to close his eyes. Then, opening them again, his face brighteneng in joy, he exclaimed eagerly, "Quick—your price!"

"Here, friend—it is yours for the asking—and without any price."

With trembling fingers, Doctor Koro snatched the Magic Stone. But no sooner was it nestling in his palm, than its unearthly radiance vanished. Bewildered, he gaped at the stone, hope fading from his eyes. "Look—it has lost its healing power!"

"Nay, not so my friend—it never had any healing power of itself. This stone but reflects the healing Light of Selfless Love in the heart of its possessor."

"Then—in my heart—there is no Light of Selfless Love? No light at all?"

The other was silent, but his eyes shone with infinite compassion. Doctor Koro shook his head, letting out a tired sigh. "Not only am I, of myself, powerless to heal my own child—but even the Magic Stone is of no avail to me. You must come home with me and try to save Elsa—you, who call me a friend."

"Yes, friend. Let us be on our way."

AS THEY DROVE ON in the carriage through the falling snow of that winter eve, Doctor Koro had little to say to his companion. Finally he spoke: "I don't know who you are—and I admit I have thought and said some unkind things about you. But I am willing to make up for everything. I will set you up in decent quarters and with full equipment. I will cooperate with you in your work with the poor; and, if you are able to save Elsa, I will build and donate a hospital, also. "

"And—if I should not be able to heal Elsa?"

Doctor Koro caught his breath. He felt the light from those compassionate

eyes burning into his soul and laying it bare. Then an amazing thing happened to him. He experienced a powerful release of something deep within him; something that had lain like a heavy burden on his soul throughout his life. And in a voice that sounded strange to his own ears, he heard his answer: "Whether you save Elsa or not, my offer stands."

"It is well, my friend. Now I can go on to serve in other places where I am needed. You will now truly be the physician of this town—to rich and poor alike; making no distinction between your brothers of the One Human Family. Will you stop the carriage, so that I may get out."

"But—but Elsa? Who will save—"

"You will, friend."

"I? I have tried—I have not the power."

"Where is the stone I gave to you?"

"Here—in my coat pocket."

"Take it out and look at it."

Doctor Koro did as he was bidden. When lo! he fell back in awe at what he beheld. The stone was blazing with the same blinding splendor as when first he had seen it in the hand of the other.

When he opened his eyes again, he was alone in the carriage. He peered out through the falling snow, searching in the murk. But the other was nowhere to be seen. In a hushed voice, Doctor Koro exclaimed: "What a strange man! I wonder who—"

The words froze on his lips. There, shining up at him from the stone, was the living image of his recent companion!...

* * * * * * *

EACH OF US CAN BE A HEALING LIGHT to his brothers of humanity if he but do something to meet the need of his fellow man; if he but share what he has and give of himself without thought of reward or return. Thereby will he give birth to the Regenerating Power of Selfless Love within his own heart. For, in this hour of great human need, it is necessary to embrace the life of Selfless Service as a high privilege. Thus we shall hasten the reappearance of the Great Healer of Galilee, and help Him to lead mankind into the Light of a New Age of Unity and Lasting Peace....

INTERIOR ESTRANGEMENT

Many people live their lives almost completely on the outside of themselves. Life, however, has two sides, an inside as well as an outside. He who lives on the outside of himself is living just "one-half" of his existence for he is ignoring his interior Self. And so it is that some men walk down the street being only half a person. They may be well dressed, ride in a fine car, live in a luxury apartment—but what are they like within?

OUR TYPE OF CIVILIZATION, because it is mechanical, material and technological, has done much to estrange modern man from his interior. This is one of the great tragedies of our times. By reducing Man to one-half himself our civilization has alienated him from the Center of his being. His life tends to become less and less of an organism and more and more of a mechanism. Pushed too far this kind of existence undoubtedly checks man's healthy exuberance as it curtails his creative powers. Every person pays an enormous price for the lure and enchantment of outward appearances.

To be in balance a man must be capable of looking to his interior Self for support. A purely external life with its manifold surface activities is bound to peter out sooner or later. When a man's Center is gone, his inward image of himself has, in all probability, been decomposed by the devastating forces of his environment. His hope of re-gaining the other half of himself is most certainly through some form of Self-Affirmation which implies a growing awareness of his spiritual stature. It can never come about as long as there is interior estrangement.

— Rabbi Ernest R. Trattner

THE SECRET...

HAPPINESS IS HEAVEN'S reward to those who bring happiness into the hearts of others. There is all the difference in the world between pleasure and happiness. Happiness comes alone from giving; pleasure from getting. Happiness belongs to the world of Spirit; pleasure belongs to the world of selfish pursuits.

—Harry Halsey Starrett

AUTUMN: THE CROWN OF LIFE

Human life has its seasons: Winter, that part of our nature which mothers the kernel of life, erupts in the Spring with all its newness, beauty and promise. Tender, untried, we grow apace, bracing ourself against the cycle of the unknown dangers of Summer; the droughts of uncertainty, the violent storms of mutual misunderstandings and the searing heat of wars. Worn out and disillusioned, we find ourselves singularly alone and beaten as physical activities begin to cease and we are released from active physical life.

Ultimately, the call of Autumn is heard. By now, through solitary meditation, the realization of God is apparent. We have found our roots: our soul and Heaven within. The resurrection of Autumn brings out all the latent talent and beauty within which has lain dormant these many years and we are now free to express our individual endowments which HE will then expose to us if we will but accept.

—Clara Ullrich Samuels

HEALING LEAVES

(The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:2)

The wounds of life cannot be cured
By balm from any tree,
Except the one that flourishes
Beyond earth's boundary;

The one whose leaves are made to heal
The wounds that earth has made
Is growing by the Crystal stream
Where harm cannot invade.

I long to touch the healing leaves
And stand beneath the tree,
Freed from the wounds that life has made,
And earth's mortality.

— Florence French

CHRIST LIVES

Gladys K. Hembree

DEAR MOM: Well, the way I'm improving, I'll be out of this wheel chair any day now, but even this is better than being in bed, and it is good to get around and perhaps make it a trifle easier for others who cannot help themselves. Nurses are so overworked, and the same is true of the doctors.

Since convalescing here I have thought of father so much and what his work must have been during World War I. He was stationed in this sector of France you know, and I am reminded of so many things he told us of his experiences as a Chaplain, I have felt his presence very near today. It seemed like He, the Comforter, was here too, just as father told us so many times, of how he felt His presence, years ago, in the other war, and as you and father have so often said if we become receptive and let God work through us, there is no limit to the service we may render to our fellow man. I am very thankful for the opportunity to help in a small way here in the hospital.

THIS MORNING as I was wheeling myself out of the chapel, the Chaplain asked me if I would like to help him. He was very busy and had promised several of the boys he would help them write letters home, so we went back to the ward and he told them I would help. And Mom, several of them have praying mothers, I know that, just like you. It is not difficult to write letters for boys like that, it was almost like I was writing to you. After we had finished with the letters we visited awhile, and one boy told me, "You see, mother doesn't know I have lost a hand, and she expects me to continue my work with father when I return home, and that is just what I intend to do, I can do it too, when I get my artificial hand. There is no limit to what we can do, if we only think so. The Chaplain is a regular guy, isn't he? He has given me the courage to fight this thing out. When they brought me in from the front the future looked pretty dismal, but the Chaplain has made me see things in a different light. He says you can succeed if you know the power that is within you. He is helping me to know there is a power in each of us that is capable of meeting anything, he just seems to radiate some sort of power that gives you confidence. It must be the living Christ!"

After hearing him talk like that, Mom, I knew I was supposed to come over here and catch the "torch" as it were, and keep it burning. I believe father is very near to me, helping me. He would wish this sort of immortality, that

is to live in the hearts and lives of those who follow. I have heard him say this many times, but at that time I did not think about it seriously. Lately I am reminded of so many things he said, and especially since I have been over here. I guess it is because we are so close to things, and we see some of the real values of life, such as courage, fortitude, sacrifice, and love. I would not be alive today if it had not been for a kid from Alabama, but that is another story, and the telling of it can wait until I get home.

THE IMPORTANT THING now is, I am catching the spirit of the living Christ, and I hope to do my share to keep it alive, to "carry the torch" as father would say. Today I couldn't help but overhear a part of a conversation between two surgeons, as I was sitting at the end of the corridor resting a few moments after lunch. One of them was saying, "I noticed it too, and wondered if we were going to be able to save that boy. He was in pretty bad shape, and you were in no condition to operate, after working most of the night. All at once you seemed to catch your second wind. Suddenly I noticed your hand steady itself, and your fingers manipulated themselves as though under a power greater than human. I seemed to feel an unseen presence in the room myself."

"Yes, I felt it too, and I knew speed meant everything in those few moments, as the boy was in a bad way from shock when he was brought in last night. I was weary from over work, when all at once I sort of let go, and in that instant I felt a quickening of strength greater than anything I have ever experienced before. It was something I just cannot explain. You know I am not a religious man at all, but there was something, an unseen presence, as you said, in that operating room last night. Of that I am positive. But what it was I don't know. And the boy will pull through, I'm positive of that too."

Yes, Mom, I know Christ lives and walks among men today just as surely as He did nineteen hundred years ago, and while I don't plan on following in father's footsteps as a minister, I do feel what I have seen here will help me to carry out many of his "projects" as he was fond of calling them, that of "finding our lives in losing them through service".

Unselfish acts have greatest weight
If heaven you are wooing.

— Ernest Evans

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SORROW

Dr. W. J. Thompson

"If there is a good God, supreme over all, why does He permit suffering and sorrow in the world?" The question of course is not unique; it has been asked through the centuries. But it supposes that goodness and suffering have nothing in common.

In the Scriptures we read (Psalm 119, verse 71): "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." And in Mark 8:31, we read of Jesus Christ instructing his followers: "He began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things." This was indeed the beginning of a new lesson for humanity. The Gentiles made a God of strength. To them the ideal son of man was a being on whom the woes of the world made no impression. But Jesus contradicted the ancient ideal and taught his disciples that the true ideal is not the inability but the capacity to suffer! Because he hungered in the wilderness, sank weary by the well of Sychar, was utterly fatigued in the boat on the Sea of Gaililee, wept openly at Bethany, and thirsted on the cross of Calvary—these things do not disprove his divinity but offer conclusive evidence of his divine personality and power.

"For in that he hath himself suffered, being tempted, he is able to help them that are tempted."

ONE OF THE GREAT PARADOXES of human life is that pain is often the path to power, and suffering becomes the secret of success! If you doubt this, consider human history as a whole, and you will discover that the great accomplishments of mankind have come from those who had close personal acquaintance with sorrow and suffering.

The words of the Master come to us: "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." This means far more than the promise of joy later, after trial. It means that the very sorrow itself shall be transformed into joy!

Book Review

REINCARNATION, An East-West Anthology compiled and edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston; Julian Press, 80 E. 11th St., NYC, 1961, 341 pp, $6.50.

It is well known, though generally disregarded by most westerners, that the doctrine of reincarnation is an integral part of the great religions of the Orient and has been such for thousands of years. It is perhaps even more significant that this fascinating concept has exercised an increasing influence on the thinking of great numbers of Westerners in the last century. There are several strong reasons for this, of which the most telling is that the doctrine of reincarnation, or rebirth, illuminates areas of human life and experience which traditional Judeo-Christian orthodoxy has never explained, and makes its appeal not to tradition, or faith, or dogma, but to reason. In an age of widespread skepticism, such as ours, whatever in religion is not rational is steadily losing its hold on the minds of each new generation, and an idea which is rooted in rationality and credibility—as the concept of reincarnation turns out to be—possesses an intrinsic persuasiveness for the modern mind.

For someone to whom the ideas of karma and reincarnation are mostly unfamiliar, the two well-known books dealing with the life of the great psychic Edgar Cayce provide the most interesting and convincing introduction to the subject: *There is a River* by Thomas Sugrue, and *Many Mansions* by Gina Cerminara. For anyone who has read either of these two classic works, or who already has some familiarity with the basic ideas of reincarnation, we strongly recommend a new book on the subject: REINCARNATION, an absorbing and unrivalled anthology of selections from ancient and modern writers, of East and West, of all religions, compiled and edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston.

Numerous Oriental writers and sages are represented in this work, of course, but it comes as a surprise to discover more than 400 Western thinkers included, coming from all walks of life and all areas of belief—philosophers, theologians, poets, dramatists, novelists, statesmen, scientists, psychologists. REINCARNATION has been praised by individuals as different as Joel Goldsmith, Daniel Poling, Dr. J. B. Rhine, Huston Smith, and Pitrim Sorokin, among others. We are happy to join them and to recommend this extraordinary book unstintedly to our readers. There can be little doubt that it is the finest of its kind and deserves to be read by anyone who has found the idea of reincarnation (or transmigration, as it is sometimes called) worthy of serious consideration.

—*P.H.*

NOTICES and COMMENTS

NEW TRUSTEE. We are pleased to announce the election of a new member to our Board of Trustees: Miss Edwiene Schmitt, A.B., L.L.D., L.L.B., of New York City. Miss Schmitt, an attorney at law, is a member of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, N. Y., and a member of the Church Council and counsel to the church. She is also a member of the Lutheran Welfare Council, and member of and counsel to Lutheran Social Services. She is President of the Board of Visitors of Brooklyn State Hospital and past President of the Association of Boards of Visitors of the Mental Hygiene Institutions of the State of New York. Miss Schmitt's broad and extensive background and her deep interest in the work of Fellowship in Prayer will bring valuable qualities to her membership on our Board.

1962 CHRISTMAS CARD. Several years ago we arranged to have some unusually attractive Christmas Cards made available to our readers and friends. The response was very favorable. We received countless letters telling us how overjoyed everyone was with their cards:..."Very loveliest I've ever seen"..."so meaningful and different from those on the commercial market"..."they carry the real message of Christmas".... to quote a few.

Recently a beautiful design for a new 1962 Christmas Card was offered to us and accepted. Regular subscribers of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER will receive a free sample of this card, entitled *Christmas Presence,* enclosed in this issue, along with price list and order blank.

We hope others will write in requesting a sample card as well. We invite your orders for more of these unusual and appealing cards and suggest that orders be mailed in as soon as possible. As an added convenience, the cards will be mailed with postage prepaid.

FIP CIRCULATING LIBRARY. Plans are well under way to inaugurate a circulating library of religious and inspirational literature that we have received over the years. We hope to have definite news about this in our next issue.

HORTON MEMORIAL. We are happy to report further on our announcement in the April issue regarding the memorial for Miss B. Flora Horton.

Through the auspices of the Utica Rotary Club, a Memorial Bible in 14 volumes will be presented in the near future to the Utica, N. Y. Library (where Miss Horton began her long career as librarian) and a suitable bookplate is being prepared for each volume. A day for presentation exercises will be set soon...Miss Horton, who died on February 3 of this year, was a long-time friend of FIP and a volunteer worker in our office for five years.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS. This issue presents the work of more new writers than any issue in a long time, which is a source of gratification for all of us. Mrs. Helen Gee Woods of Idaho Falls, Idaho, editor of *Guild* Magazine, is represented with her poem *Cathedral* on page 7 and *Rebirth Through Prayer,* which seemed appropriate for page one...Dr. Margaret Moore Jacobs' poetic reminder, *Garden of Life,* appears on page 22. Dr. Jacobs, a writer of long standing, lives in Clarendon, Arkansas...Loreta Inman of Atlanta, Georgia, has had verse published in many quarters and we are happy to welcome her to our pages once again. Her poem, *Alchemy of Prayer,* appears on the front cover...Florence French's *Healing Leaves,* on page 29, is the first of several poems she has promised to send us. She makes her home in Stillwater, Oklahoma...Mrs. Gladys K. Hembree, Witchita, Kansas, has offered us an unusual World War II piece, *Christ Lives,* on page 30...Dr. Robert H. Woodward is represented with his fine article on Benjamin Franklin's approach to prayer, on page 15. Dr. Woodward is Head of the English Department at San Jose State College, San Jose, California...Louise Weibert Sutton's provocatively written *Small Miracles* appears on page 8. Mrs. Sutton resides in Evansville, Indiana...*Know Thyself,* on page 20, was contributed by Mrs. Carol M. Mandola of St. Petersburg, Florida. Mrs. Mandola came to our attention at the suggestion of two of our friends in Los Angeles.

We are indeed gratified that FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is steadily attracting new writers and we hope this important trend will continue .It is worthy of note that all of the above writers come from many sections of the country. To all of them we extend a cordial and appreciative welcome to our pages and expect to present more of their work again...At the same time we are grateful for the faithful cooperation of writers whose names have become familiar to our readers, and upon whose talents and support we have come to rely with confidence.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies. Certain back issues are also available.

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VOICES OF THE SEA

Azure sea outspread.
Sea-gulls flying.

Grey-green sea. Overhead
Breezes dying.

Emeralds dancing in foam.
Whitecaps racing.

Sea-weed strayed from home,
Weird interlacing.

Moonlight rolled ashore
Noiselessly falling.

Starlight. Evermore
Voices calling.

— Mildred Long

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